

BALANCING TIME DEMANDS...A VITAL STRATEGIC ASSET

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL PAUL R. BEINEKE
United States Air Force

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USAWC CLASS OF 2010

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U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013-5050

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| REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE | | | | Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188 | |
|--|-----------------------------|---|---|--|---|
| Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS. | | | | | |
| 1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 15-03-2010 | | 2. REPORT TYPE Strategy Research Project | | 3. DATES COVERED (From - To) | |
| 4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Balancing Time Demands...A Vital Strategic Asset | | | | 5a. CONTRACT NUMBER | |
| | | | | 5b. GRANT NUMBER | |
| | | | | 5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER | |
| 6. AUTHOR(S) Lt Col Paul R. Beineke | | | | 5d. PROJECT NUMBER | |
| | | | | 5e. TASK NUMBER | |
| | | | | 5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER | |
| 7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) COL George Woods, Department of Command, Leadership and Management | | | | 8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER | |
| 9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army War College 122 Forbes Avenue Carlisle, PA 17013 | | | | 10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S) | |
| | | | | 11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S) | |
| 12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Distribution A: Unlimited | | | | | |
| 13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES | | | | | |
| 14. ABSTRACT A strategic challenge before our services is setting a sustainable battle rhythm for the long war. While troops are fully engaged in contingencies around the world, the time spent in garrison is expected to be invested in a balanced fashion between service and off duty priorities. Although this intent has been clearly identified as necessary for the health of the force and clearly articulated by senior leadership, it appears as if the current demands are not in balance. The Army and Air Force are moving to address this imbalance. This paper will look at how two services are addressing the time demands on soldiers or airmen and determine if they are a focused on the symptoms or the cause of the imbalance. Finally, it will review some options to address the strategic challenge of ensuring troops can sustain a balance at work and off-duty while investing in the next generation of professional servicemen. | | | | | |
| 15. SUBJECT TERMS Time Demands | | | | | |
| 16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF: | | | 17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UNLIMITED | 18. NUMBER OF PAGES 28 | 19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON |
| a. REPORT UNCLASSIFIED | b. ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED | c. THIS PAGE UNCLASSIFIED | | | 19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code) |

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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Lieutenant Colonel Paul R. Beineke
United States Air Force

Colonel George Woods
Project Adviser

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U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Lieutenant Colonel Paul R. Beineke
TITLE: Balancing Time Demands...A Vital Strategic Asset
FORMAT: Strategy Research Project
DATE: 12 March 2010 WORD COUNT: 5,962 PAGES: 28
KEY TERMS: Time Demands
CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

A strategic challenge before our services is setting a sustainable battle rhythm for the long war. While troops are fully engaged in contingencies around the world, the time spent in garrison is expected to be invested in a balanced fashion between service and off duty priorities. Although this intent has been clearly identified as necessary for the health of the force and clearly articulated by senior leadership, it appears as if the current demands are not in balance. The Army and Air Force are moving to address this imbalance. This paper will look at how two services are addressing the time demands on soldiers or airmen and determine if they are focused on the symptoms or the cause of the imbalance. Finally, it will review some options to address the strategic challenge of ensuring troops can sustain a balance at work and off-duty while investing in the next generation of professional servicemen.

BALANCING TIME DEMANDS...A VITAL STRATEGIC ASSET

Time is the most valuable thing a man can spend.

—Theophrastus
Aristotle's protégé¹

Nearly every service member has heard about the importance of time management. Yet as services are stressed it seems DoD struggles with the strategic stewardship of demands placed on troops' time. Strategic leaders appear to have an intuitive sense that we cannot be all things to all people, but their decisions do not seem to acknowledge that balancing time demands is a zero-sum challenge. This paper will examine first the military profession to illuminate why this is a strategic issue. It will then move to a review of where and how the force is currently stressed along with the risks for a force that permits time demands to outgrow capacity. Next, it will examine the efficacy of service initiatives to respond to growing demands on troops' time; including asking if there should be a process for assuring policy decisions do not have unintended second-order costs. Finally, some options will be presented to permanently improve the strategic stewardship of service members' time. To begin this assessment the first step is to review attributes of military service that distinguish it from many other vocations.

Aspects of The Profession of Arms

Military service is frequently referred to as the profession of arms. This label implies that the services are comprised of professionals. The American public through Congress continues to support these professionals in the form of standing forces. Examining some of the attributes of professionals and how they serve will provide the foundation for examining how they invest their time. Military professionals balance their time between competing roles that involve bureaucratic tasks and professional

judgments.² These roles were examined in-depth in 2004 when West Point hosted a distinguished group of scholars investigating the nature of the Army as a profession.³ This effort launched a renewed study of the profession of arms yielding results that are insightful in many areas beyond this review of time management. Each service functions to secure our nation by developing the capability to win our nation's wars. The development of this capability involves fostering a professional corps of service members. If serving the nation has both a bureaucratic and professional nature then it would be difficult to make decisions about the use of a soldier's time without examining the balance between bureaucratic and professional demands.

Professional expertise is sometimes described as expert knowledge. Dr. Snider's discussion of expert knowledge describes it as abstract and constantly evolving in a way that requires a lifelong commitment to learning by the practitioner.⁴ Other characteristics of a professional include the exercise of discretionary judgment. It is this professional nature that makes for a vibrant, effective and enduring force. When America's military leaders are challenged by evolving threats in new locations it is their discretionary judgment nurtured throughout their professional lives that is required to ensure success.⁵ The strategic challenge is to foster development of judgment, critical thinking and advanced problem solving skills in spite of the fact that bureaucratic tasks appear more immediate and urgent.

Bureaucratic tasks are not a waste of time, but rather requisite for establishing and sustaining large organizations. They are required to manage the organization and focus resources on the mission. Leaders ignore bureaucratic elements of their profession at their peril because part of each job involves these sorts of tasks.⁶ Due to

the repetitive and somewhat predictable nature of these tasks, they do not require the type of expert knowledge that distinguishes the soldier from a myriad of other vocations. Institutionally the strategic leader sets expectations and creates processes to ensure their services accomplish the mission. This paper examines how unchecked growth in demand on troops' time will erode their ability to develop expert knowledge and ultimately impede the development of the next generation of professionals to defend our nation.

Today's Demands

The challenge of balancing time demands manifests itself differently in the US Air Force and US Army due primarily to how each service deploys their forces. The Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) model is designed to manage readiness for both Full Spectrum Operations as well as deployment taskings by setting the timetable for deployment preparations as well as how much time is spent in garrison resetting for the next mission.⁷ Army commanders are challenged to balance their training calendar while in garrison. Most Army operational units deploy as a group, which requires their leaders to make decisions as they reset about when and how to accomplish each training requirement. Army leaders have been losing flexibility and control over discretionary time on their training calendars during the decades since the Cold War ended. Demands are building for a variety of tasks including preparing for major combat operations, conducting stabilization missions, and ancillary requirements for every soldier.⁸ Demands for time on the training calendar have now exceeded the supply forcing leaders at various levels to make decisions about what mandatory items will be omitted.

The challenge for the Air Force depends on if the unit deploys intact or if the unit is tasked to supply small teams or even individuals to meet combatant commander needs. If the unit deploys as a group, the Air Force challenge mirrors the Army challenge as commander's work to meet all training requirements during preparation for their Air Expeditionary Force (AEF) deployment.

For most of the Air Force rather than compressing the requirements into increasingly small reset periods like the Army must do, they find themselves sustaining all home station operations while deploying thousands forward. This arrangement stresses the force by supporting world-wide contingencies without any curtailment of home station missions. This results in each unit being chronically undermanned as leaders are forced to balance resources between the mission and support tasks in the form of additional duties and ancillary training.

Additional duties are assigned to individuals where a program or task may not merit a dedicated position; some examples of these types of programs include unit fitness program administration, monitoring government travel card usage, annual information security training and literally hundreds of other programs that have accumulated at a slow, but deliberate pace over the past two decades.⁹ The Air Force response to this stress has been to take a close look at each additional duty and look for smarter ways to accomplish ancillary training.

In terms of professional demands, additional duties frequently resemble bureaucratic tasks rather than challenges requiring discretionary judgment. Certain programs are described as commanders' programs or leadership challenges, but they remain essentially bureaucratic tasks. By labeling these bureaucratic tasks as

commanders' programs senior leaders are communicating an expectation that unit leaders will deliver results. Rotational stress and undermanning each combine with growing bureaucratic or training tasks to place greater demands on peoples' time. Therefore, analysis and recommendations can be relevant to both services.

By their very nature these types of bureaucratic tasks are easily measured and tracked, creating a risk that leaders and followers will invest their time in bureaucratic tasks disproportionately. Senior leaders appear to focus on the tasks that can be measured and tracked, thereby diminishing focus and priority on the development of expert knowledge and the exercise of discretionary judgment. The strategic issue here involves the fact that time is a finite resource. When demand on peoples' time exceeds supply it is vital that leaders clearly prioritize how time is to be invested so as to develop the next generation of professionals.

Because of the ways in which the US Army and US Air Force present forces to the combatant commands the pace and demand of overseas operations results in time demands at home station that exceed resources available. For example, during one command tour a squadron supported overseas contingency operations in various locations with an average of one air traffic control supervisor deployed. The squadron manning document authorized eight supervisors. Operating with a de facto 12.5% reduction in capacity forced tradeoffs between upgrade training or shorter airfield operating hours and regularly left the squadron operating without a bench to deal with unexpected absences such that operating hours would be cut 50% if a supervisor had health problems. Additional duties had to be picked up by other squadron members due to the stress on the air traffic controllers. Under a sustainable model, a fully manned

squadron might have the people to meet most additional duty responsibilities and the time to complete ancillary training.

Growing demands caused by persistent overseas operations threaten the long-term professional character of service because some leaders respond to time management challenges by focusing on accomplishment of bureaucratic tasks at the expense of developing expert knowledge. This risk can be seen throughout each service as the Army and Air Force tackle the issue. Two years ago an Air Force audit of additional duties and ancillary training requirements identified a total of 1072 additional duties and took a step in the right direction by recommending elimination of 165 additional duties.¹⁰ The Air Force Headquarters Staff has deployed teams in both 2008 and 2009 in an effort to study the effects of the current additional duties and ancillary training requirements. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff expressed concern about the time and costs imposed on our forces in the current environment with his 2010 priority message:

In measures like dwell time, we still do not have sufficient fidelity below the unit level, down to the impacts on individuals and families. We do not yet have a common understanding of the time and costs to reset and reconstitute our forces—but just how fast and how well we reset will become a driver for global risk. We must make all of these a higher priority.¹¹

Over the past two years the Air Force has emphasized accountability throughout the service in response to mishandling of the nuclear mission. A frequent message has recalled the heritage of Strategic Air Command (SAC) and their standard of perfection in every task. At the height of the Cold War SAC warriors were tested on no-notice evaluations where the minimum passing grade was perfection. This culture was driven by their motto: Peace is our Profession.¹² That is an excellent message and the proper

standard for an organization entrusted with ensuring the survival and success of liberty, but it creates stresses as missions and tasks increase while force structure does not. The Air Force does not have sufficient time in a day or the people in a unit to dedicate to each task. Individuals and units are shouldered with the responsibility and leaders with the potential ethical dilemma of deciding what not to do aware that the service's expectation is that it will all get done.

Strategically the task list needs to be sized to match the capabilities of the members of the organization. Simply put, in a constrained world you cannot get tasks completed fast, cheap and flawlessly...you must compromise in one area. Unfortunately most of the time the first action is to cut resources. Corresponding reductions in mission or responsibilities lag the initial resource cuts by years. A result of this delay is a potential mixed message where intermediate and lower echelon members of the organization buckle down to do as much as possible while strategic leaders discuss the need to do less with less. Tough calls are being made about future resources that require corresponding shaping of the unit's missions. When strategic leaders cut the resources but do not reshape the mission an ethical dilemma or a leadership authenticity crisis can develop.

According to Harvard Business School Professor Bill George authentic leaders lead with purpose, meaning, and values.¹³ Integrity and transparency are vital to the success of authentic leaders. The core values of the services speak to successful leadership and are not inconsistent with authentic leadership. Leadership of this type is requisite in a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous national security environment where the sands of the current crisis shift within the larger national security framework.

The current backdrop where services are stressed to meet the current demands without compromising their ability to respond to more serious national security challenges, yearns for dynamic leadership. Whether you call it a joint expeditionary tasking or an in-lieu of requirement, the cost of meeting the immediate needs has a corresponding offset against capabilities of the force as originally conceived. While we might describe the offset against our near-term major combat operations capabilities as accepting risk, has that risk been closely examined or is it more akin to gambling?

The strategic challenge of ensuring not to bankrupt or corrupt the indispensable resource, (people) ought to begin with an introspective review of current expectations and doctrine. The Air Force roadmap for leadership and force development has been articulated in Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 1-1. This document articulates a concept of leadership that consists of three elements: core values, competencies, and actions.¹⁴

Prime components of leadership expected in the Air Force are the core values of integrity, service and excellence. Conceptually similar to other services these values articulate the moral character expected of each member of the service. The second component acknowledges that skills and experiences learned throughout a career facilitate progression to the next level of responsibility. Third, AFDD 1-1 describes the interplay of mission and a leader's influence to empower a subordinate leader to get things done.¹⁵ A situation where a leader's action or inaction permits a sustained imbalance between capacity and demands would appear to challenge the core values. Attributes like courage to do the right thing at all times, accept responsibility and be accountable combined with an open, transparent, and just environment are indicative of

how the Air Force envisions leaders will operate when they internalize the core values.¹⁶

Are these attributes reflected in the current environment where leaders permit the growth of tasks without making the tough calls about what will no longer be required?

Another facet of how leadership relates to decisions about time commitments can be seen through an ethical lens. Choices about allocating resources are frequent tasks for strategic leaders. Leaders have useful tools for evaluating dollar values and making cost to benefit comparisons in the fiscal realm. The decisions faced concerning use of time are no less weighty. However, our decision tools are far less precise. Because leaders care about their troops and acknowledge them as the most important resource, there is an ethical commitment to executing a sustainable force generation model. Ethically leaders also are expected to be good stewards of their manpower, especially when it comes to force development.¹⁷

Senior leaders demonstrate awareness of the demands on their troops' time and are engaging the issue from various directions. The Secretary of the AF and Chief of Staff approached this issue through the "Airmen's Time Assessment" study. The study was very timely due to the changing nature of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. These conflicts demand many in both the Army and Air Force to serve in roles outside their specialties as they contribute to counterinsurgency operations.¹⁸ When contingency responsibilities differ from the primary mission additional preparation time must be invested in order to be ready to deploy. Growing predeployment training requirements, combined with reduced time at home between rotations, puts acute pressure on Army units. Other services provide personnel to augment the Army in an effort to more evenly share the stress of persistent operations. This increases stress in

the Air Force due to greater prep time for deployments as Airmen accomplished several weeks of training at Army installations prior to deploying. This period is added to time the Airmen are away from their home station mission, thereby increasing the stress resulting from their absence.

Nation-building skills are in high demand and interagency partners are under resourced in the area of manpower to meet these demands causing more demands to fall on the shoulders of the DoD.¹⁹ The demands of non-traditional tasks are not expected to diminish in the current world environment. The self-imposed stresses that result from resource cuts combine with growing tasks from outside the DoD to raise the sense of urgency surrounding this topic. These demands require immediate systemic solutions to sustain and develop service members. Without solutions the risk is driving them away due to an imbalance between professional and bureaucratic demands. These stresses and risks are compounded by trends toward longer duty days in garrison and a perceived lack of authentic leadership.

The Current Response

Under Secretary of the Army Nelson Ford offered his opinion of how to balance future demands in an environment of declining resources at his farewell in January 2009.

History suggests that, despite our best efforts to explain the Army's need for future expansion in its base funding, reductions will happen again and probably soon. That means that if we are going to avoid the next hollow army, we need to start now figuring out how to do more with less.²⁰

When examining the response one must begin by examining the current initiatives and doctrine. In addition to the review conducted by the Air Force what tools and policies are being employed to return a sense of balance to the demands placed on

our troops? Will current doctrine facilitate or impede solutions? What other approaches have the potential to help our troops restore balance to their professional lives?

Two independent approaches provide the quickest response and assure long-term stability in the area of managing tasks. The first approach is a “treat the symptoms” method. This approach includes Air Force efforts to consolidate and cut additional duties by encompassing efforts to get immediate control of the demands seen today. The second approach involves addressing the systemic issues that have done a poor job of limiting the demands levied on the troops. Elements of this approach would include a review of leadership doctrine, examining culture and process elements that inform senior leaders in their decisions. The Airmen’s Time Assessment (ATA) focuses more on the “treat the symptoms” approach with less focus on systemic change because it looks to cut or combine current tasks. The time assessment does establish gatekeepers for additional duties and ancillary training. These are systemic changes that should inhibit future growth in those areas, but it is beyond the charter of the team that did the time assessment to examine the Air Force approach to time demands writ large. Without a deeper strategic review of and update in the systemic approach there is a risk of solving the short-term time crunch but slipping back into a situation where demands again outstrip time resources.

In the Army a different approach is being employed at the operational level and below in an effort to communicate to subordinate organizations that time demands are outstripping available hours in the day. One noteworthy example comes in the form of a policy letter from LTG Cone, Commander US Army III Corps. In Nov 2009, he directed that the duty day will end at 1700 except Thursdays when it will end at 1500.²¹ The letter

would not have been necessary if the average workday was not extending well past 1700. While subordinate leaders have not received guidance on prioritizing tasks and training the letter seems to imply that if it cannot be done in these duty hours then it will not get done. This represents a substantial cultural change for either the Army or Air Force as each service takes pride in doing what it takes to get the job done rather than acknowledging that low priority tasks will be dropped or that a lower standard will be accepted.

Without addressing any of the cultural issues raised by the Army approach, the Air Force's major effort is the ongoing ATA. Headquarters Air Force/A1, a corporate human resources equivalent in civilian organizations, estimates the initial ATA recommendations resulted in reducing additional duty time demands by 40%.²² The ATA report went on to recommend capturing efficiency through Better Business Solutions (BBS). These BBS tend to be technology centric efforts to better manage the current and expanding work requirements without much regard to controlling or scaling back outdated requirements. Another recommendation in the ATA report was to find a manpower solution to replace a portion of administrative support troops at the squadron level. These admin troops had been eliminated during restructuring without any reduction to workload. The final recommendation, which was mentioned earlier, is to consider establishing a Headquarters Air Force (HAF) gatekeeper to centrally oversee and control expanding requirements. A HAF gatekeeper might have the leverage to be able to restrain requirements that originate in specific career fields through Air Force Instructions that become mandates to the entire Air Force. In total, the ATA report made

a total of 42 recommendations.²³ Implementation of these recommendations is progressing rapidly.

In order to validate the 2008 ATA report and focus efforts in the right place, a follow-up visit occurred to other Air Force organizations in 2009. The 2009 team added visits to Air National Guard and Air Reserve Units to get a more complete picture. This report yielded three key findings, one concerning administrative support, one addressing additional duties, and the third concerning ancillary training. The administrative finding served to follow up on the manpower recommendation in the 2008 report where 1200 civilian positions were authorized to reinvigorate the squadron level administrative staff. Concerning administrative support, the 2009 report indicated more needs to be done and suggested: adding additional civilian positions; conducting manpower studies to determine staff requirements; and leveraging additional information technology solutions. The report found that rapid improvement events concerning additional duties conducted in the past year have reduced time demands and the adoption of a gatekeeper role for the HQ AF staff is getting results. In the area of ancillary training, most of the 2008 recommendations are working but they need to continue to review and tweak the requirements.²⁴ In total there were 37 recommendations in the 2009 report.²⁵ This report has support from the highest levels of the HQ AF staff and updates are briefed quarterly to the A1.

The process of evaluating tasks with an eye toward determining manpower requirements is highly centralized and bureaucratic. The effect of this system can be seen in Air Force unit manning documents (UMD). For some operational units the documents do not reflect the current ways in which personnel are utilized. This causes

two stresses. Commanders at lower levels complain to staffers responsible for managing their human resource programs that they lack the people to accomplish their mission. Headquarters resource managers reply that commanders are mismanaging their resources and if they only employed them as outlined in the outdated UMDs they would be fine. A disconnect is that the commanders are responsible for the mission today and are utilizing their authorities to accomplish the mission. The fact that resources from a headquarters perspective are tied to dollars causes those officials to move with caution to avoid loss of funding. Fortunately the 2009 report identified weaknesses in how the manpower system determines workload on a commander's support staff and proposed studies to recommend improvements designed to more accurately capture current demands.²⁶

While these process-related recommendations will collectively have a measurable and substantial impact, there remains the need for a strategic approach to deal with this issue as it presents a strategic challenge across the services in today's national security environment. With the exception of the gatekeeper role, these actions are aimed at the symptoms but not the cultural attitude about stewardship and valuation of time. While these actions are steering the services closer to a solution, the ability to develop the next generation of professionals remains at risk. The lack of permanence to the current solutions combined with the lack of any strategic level discussion of prioritization demands some additional options.

The Air Force and Army have approached the stress of a high operations tempo from different angles. The Air Force approach to the challenge of supplying expeditionary forces without cutting any services at home stations involved the ATA

report.²⁷ Due to their deployment doctrine, the US Army is tackling the problem in other ways. In addition to memos, like the one from the commander of III Corps, and the acknowledgement from Adm Mullen that there is not a clear picture of the time and costs to reset forces, the Army is attempting to refashion training plans with an eye toward the time required to complete assigned training. Recently released Army training and leader development guidance continues to emphasize a theme of not simply thinking that more of a good thing is equivalent to a better solution:

We cannot simply pile more good ideas on top of old proven methods as we work through how we train, educate, and develop leaders for full-spectrum operations. We must innovate and adapt as we transform training and leader development to achieve our goals.²⁸

Options

The 2009 Army Posture Statement rightly reminds all of how the strength of the Nation and Army comes from values, ethos and people.²⁹ Whether it is a commanding general's policy or the recommendations of the Air Force Airman's Time Assessment, these initial changes need to be combined with more enduring changes to prevent a relapse. There are three specific places to focus attention from a strategic level to stabilize and better manage the growing demands on troops' time. In developing these recommendations resource constraints caused the elimination of options like contracting out all administrative or bureaucratic duties. In an era of constrained resources throwing people at the problem might address some of the symptoms, but will not likely address the causes. Budget constraints will not let you hire your way out of the problem. Some suggestions that follow are intended to update leadership development doctrine, improve manpower tools, and make modifications to service culture.

Doctrine outlining how the services develop leaders does not focus on the risks transferred to the services when senior leaders do not prioritize training. A better appreciation of the specific and implied messages received by troops who must learn to compromise and make these situations work is necessary on both the headquarters staff as well as among the senior leaders. Essentially this doctrinal and cultural discussion revolves around risk. When the service faces more work than it has resources and senior level leaders do not issue priorities, they then assume the risk of having lower-level leadership make the prioritization call. Additionally authenticity can be questioned as service members, who are both intelligent and perceptive, will see through rhetoric from senior leaders that profess their organizations will do it all well with fewer resources. Other classic comments include announcements that senior leaders will make the tough calls so as not to ask service members to do more with less.³⁰

Three simple facts highlight why this issue needs attention at the doctrine level and why efforts to remedy the situation need to address service culture over and above the current stop-gap measures. Those facts are: over-tasking exists as previously outlined; servicemen are called on to tackle an ever-widening set of tasks as the US military contributes to national security objectives in non-kinetic ways; and service cultures embrace the “make it happen” mantra without much regard for the limitations on the quantity of time resources available. Leadership development doctrine needs to clearly describe the concept of authentic leadership and explain how it relates to tackling the toughest ethical decisions faced by today’s strategic leaders.

The ability to measure attributes like costs or sizes make it easy to allocate resources to these needs along with clearly highlighting where to expect gaps. An equal

level of awareness about the demands placed on troops' time is also necessary.

Traditionally, manpower standards articulated how much to expect from each service member, but this traditional system may not be keeping pace with the rate of change in today's environment, thereby making these traditional standards less valuable. It is critical that our leaders have a clear and current picture of the state of balance between what they are demanding of troops and what capacity the troops have to deliver. If fully developed, reformed manpower capabilities would help strategic leaders see how much the current force structure can handle or how much force structure is required to operate under current or mid-term future task loads. Manpower processes need to be updated to improve responsiveness and clarity with this system without compromising the ability to meet future mission's needs due to shortsighted resource cuts.³¹

It will be difficult or perhaps impossible to restore balance without reforming this process to improve its responsiveness as well as accuracy. This step must precede efforts to change the culture of how decisions are made concerning the demands on troops' time. The final suggestion is intended to sustain a system that is in balance.

Reshaping service culture to raise awareness of how each new demand likely displaces a previously valuable task is essential. Accomplishing this will dovetail very nicely with the discussion of the value of authentic leadership. Essentially this proposal will require a cultural change as the services learn to be better stewards of their troops time. Changing organizational culture requires focus, persistence and time. One such game plan is an eight-stage process outlined by John Kotter in his book *Leading Change*.³² He articulates several points about how leaders need to be out in front guiding the change, and urgently advocating for change. For cultural change to take

hold and be embraced, the indispensable role of senior leadership cannot be underestimated.

A result of a new awareness of leadership's role in setting priorities will shift how new initiatives are proposed. Commanders already ask the 'what will it cost' question when being pitched a new program. In addition to dollar or space requirements this question needs to also trigger a discussion about time commitments. The desire here is not to automatically reject more initiatives, rather the discussion ensures time costs are considered from the beginning. This will also create an opportunity to discuss and include offsets for additional time commitments in the decision-making process.

Each new demand of troop's time can be met with one of three responses: increased manpower; increased efficiency and productivity; or a corresponding cut in other less important tasks. A natural sequel to these recommendations is to make a conscious effort at the highest levels in each service to articulate a prioritization scheme to assist subordinate leaders as to how to get first things first. This approach is needed because there are places today where leaders label so many tasks as top priority that the concept of priority is meaningless. If there are not enough resources to meet all of an organization's top priorities, there is really no priority system at all. Tough calls have to be made. There is no better way for senior leaders to develop future talent than for them to model this behavior in a visible way.

Another method of increasing capacity is to improve productivity. Rather than offer new techniques, the purpose is to caution against pitfalls. Frequently, technology is held up as an enabler that will result in improved abilities to do more with less. This seems intuitive but needs to be treated with the same level of skepticism as other new

proposals. There are times when a new information technology tool is introduced with promises that far exceed its capabilities. The problem occurs when cuts are made to other resources with the promise that the technology will enable greater results with fewer people.

Ever-expanding demands on the time of our troops in today's vague and uncertain security environment represent a strategic challenge that requires a leadership response in the form of appropriate doctrine, and necessary culture change. In times of constrained resources, where more personnel are prohibitively costly, the issue of time stewardship will have to be addressed at some point. Rather than wait for the proverbial train wreck to force action, these options provide strategic alternatives for leadership to deal with the challenge on their terms. At the end of this review the desired end state is a service with all of the capability, ingenuity, and resilience to meet its mission challenges and continues to maintain a competitive advantage over the Nation's adversaries—a state that currently makes the Nation's military the envy of the world. Additionally, this end state will ensure a healthy approach to future tasks that ensures the development of professional knowledge by service members while maintaining a good work and family balance.

Conclusion

When outlining this strategic challenge the twin roles service leaders play as both bureaucrats and professionals was highlighted. Their need to be good stewards of America's resources necessitates they invest a portion of their time in certain bureaucratic measures. The danger is that these tasks are simpler and easier to measure, thereby causing an insidious growth as they engulf more and more time. America's armed forces have much greater responsibilities than simple management of

the investments made in their formation. Their responsibility is the mission to provide for the security of the country. That mission requires a truly professional force. It requires professionals with the expert knowledge developed throughout a career of service that includes continuous education and an ever-expanding set of experiences. It seems clear that there is a growing imbalance in demands placed on the troops' time. This imbalance places at greatest risk the time invested in reset and in garrison preparation for the next expeditionary tasking. Consequently, home station mid-level leaders are shouldering the responsibility of deciding which service-directed training items will get accomplished and which will be deemphasized. These are the same leaders that are being developed for positions of greater responsibility. However, they may not have the bigger picture or context surrounding their choice. Short-sighted decisions are a product of when leaders spend an inordinate amount of time managing bureaucratic challenges and not enough time planning and preparing for the long-term security needs of our country.

To remedy this risk of systemic imbalance, three strategic recommendations were made. Over 40 Air Force initiatives address specific needs at certain levels but do not make a complete strategic approach to the challenge of balancing time demands. The first recommendation is to examine leadership development doctrine with an eye toward how it outlines and values authentic leadership. The message here is to ensure current and future leaders work off the same guidance. That guidance also needs to assist leaders in identifying situations where reality and policy are out of step and then highlight the value of leaders taking steps to address the disconnects rather than paying lip service to the issue.

The second proposal is to review and update manpower models so that current demands are completely and accurately captured. An update to this model will also need to be sufficiently responsive in today's environment to ensure leaders are informed as to service-wide impacts of what might seem to be subtle changes in policy and thereby enable them to consider these issues in the decision process. The end result of an accurate picture of manpower demands will permit leaders to help make the tough tradeoffs as new programs and initiatives are proposed and which programs are no longer valuable enough to warrant troops time.

The third recommendation built on the doctrine recommendation, and is informed by new manpower tools. It proposes to alter the culture within each service to constrain growth in demand for people's time. In order to accomplish this recommendation a better appreciation of the fact that leaders throughout the service need to establish a sustainable battle rhythm for this long war is needed.

These three strategic level recommendations, combined with ongoing efforts at lower levels, can help ensure the endurance and professional character of our armed forces. Further, young talent will be attracted, encouraged, and retained. This will inevitably enhance the services' ability to meet future demands and sustaining the enviably high confidence of Americans in their armed forces.

Endnotes

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